

Check Out 'Rants and Raves' Inside!

MIT's
Oldest and Largest
Newspaper



Volume 128, Number 9

Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139

The Weather
Today: Cloudy, 50°F (10°C)
Tonight: Rain, 37°F (3°C)
Tomorrow: Rain, 47°F (8°C)
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Tuesday, March 4, 2008

Random Hall Celebrates Its 40th Birthday With an Eclectic Party

By Jeff Guo
ASSOCIATE NEWS EDITOR

If the candles on the dome didn't make it obvious: Random Hall is officially over-the-hill.

Feature On Friday, Feb. 29, residents and alums gathered to celebrate the dorm's 40th anniversary — which, by cosmic technicality, tallies up to only its tenth birthday.

Home to about 90 undergraduates, the decaying brownstone on

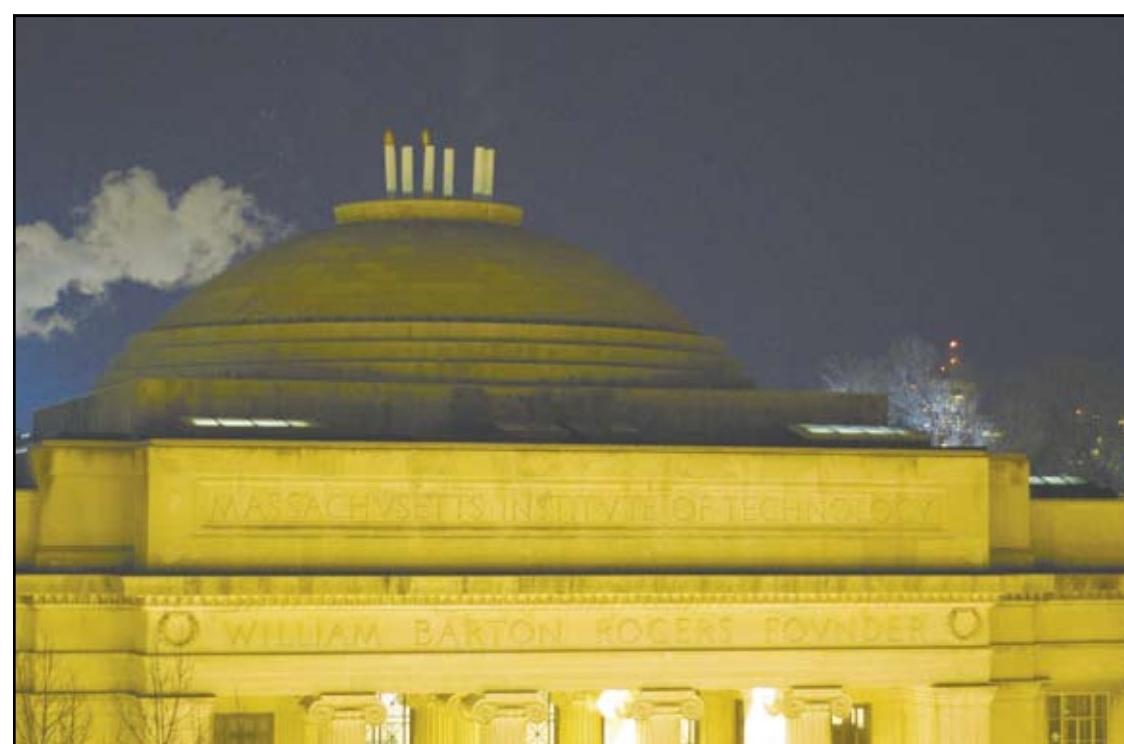
Mass Ave. looks as decrepit as ever. Its tan bricks are discolored; its steps are crumbling. At night, harsh light from the gas station next door makes the dorm seem older than its 40 years.

Random was never the darling child of the administration. Originally temporary housing, it was reluctantly pressed into service as a dorm during the '70s housing crunch. When it comes to repairs and maintenance, there is the feeling among residents that Random has always

been passed over for its glamorous brethren on dorm row.

So for years, the pipes made vulgar noises, and the water was either freezing or scalding. The plumbing was so bad that once, it spilled sewage all over the first floor and basement. That same week, a chimney blockage forced a mass evacuation as bitter fumes flooded the dorm. In the '90s, there were rumblings that Random would close for good.

Random Hall, Page 12



Six candles representing binary digits stand atop the little dome on Feb. 29 to commemorate Random Hall's 40th birthday.

Differences Between East and West Discovered in People's Brain Activity

By Carey Goldberg
THE BOSTON GLOBE

East is East and West is West, and the difference between them is starting to turn up even on brain scanners.

New brain research is adding high-tech evidence to what lower-tech psychology experiments have found for years: Culture can affect not just language and custom, but how people experience the world at

stunningly basic levels — what they see when they look at a city street, for example, or even how they perceive a simple line in a square.

Western culture, they have found, conditions people to think of themselves as highly independent entities. And when looking at scenes, Westerners tend to focus on central objects more than on their surroundings.

In contrast, East Asian cultures

tal. Michael R. Smith-Bronstein '09, the president of DU, said that the death was almost certainly an accident. Asked about the possibility that Wells killed himself, "almost everyone is sure that that was not the case ... the entire brotherhood," said Smith-Bronstein. "Rob's bed was situated close to the window," he said, adding that "everyone was asleep [when Wells fell]." Smith-Bronstein said that Wells's window did not have a fire escape outside.

Robert Kevin Moore '92, a DU alumnus, told the *Boston Globe* that he was in town for a DU initiation ceremony and that Wells slept very close to an open window because the house was usually very hot.

In the past year, three Boston-area college students have accidentally died in falls from residences.

In January, Michael Robertson, a Boston University sophomore, died after falling out of a fourth-floor window. Last November, Shawn Dow, a student at the Art Institute of Boston, was killed after falling off a roof at a party. Last August, James T. Albrecht '08 died after falling from the roof of a New York apartment building.

Pamela Dumas Serfes, MIT's executive director of news and communications, said that "fraternities have a very ... robust safety program that has to conform to city standards in Boston."

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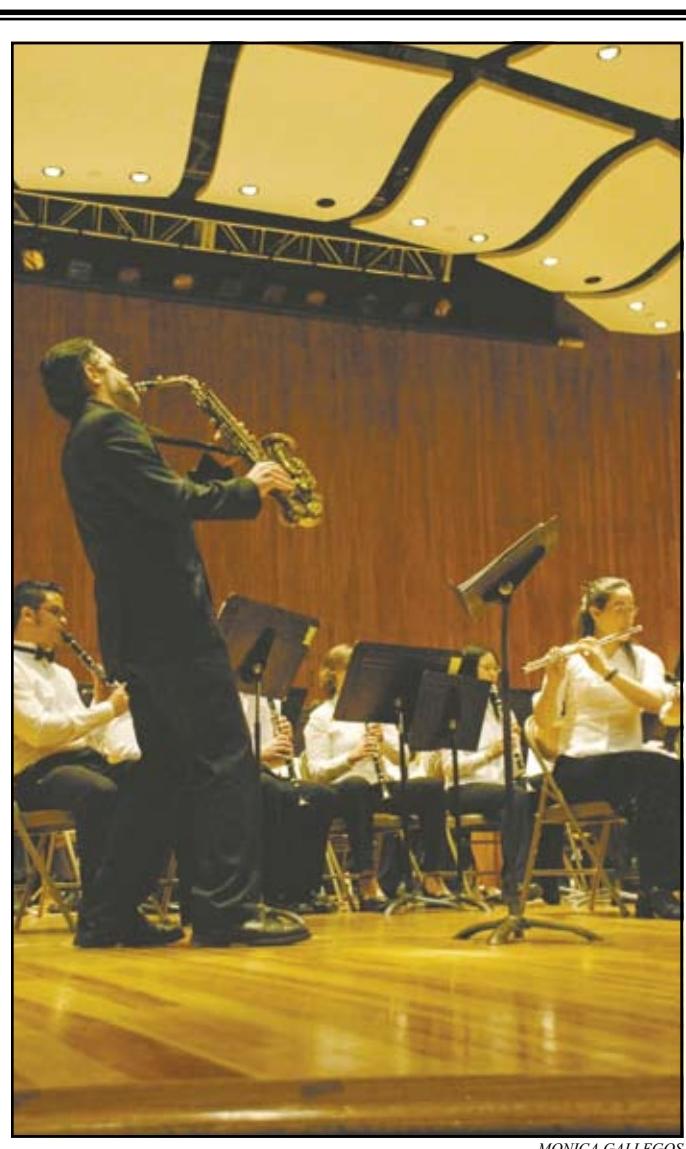
J. Mark Schuster PhD '79

J. Mark Schuster PhD '79, a professor of urban studies and planning who helped develop the field of urban cultural policy and who earned the respect of his peers, died on Feb. 25 as a result of complications from melanoma, according to the MIT News Office. He was 57.

According to Lawrence J. Vale SM '88, professor and department head of the Department of Urban Studies and Planning, "Mark had a special love for cities in times of festival." He also studied the public policy behind urban cultural events.

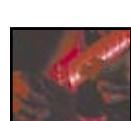
In 1976, Schuster was a member of the committee that planned Boston's bicentennial celebration. The committee founded First Night, an annual family-friendly Boston-wide cultural festival which takes place on New Year's Eve. First Night has since expanded, with over 111 celebrations planned for First Night 2009, according to the First Night International Web site.

Samuel J. Keyser, professor emeritus of Linguistics and Philosophy and Special Assistant to the Chancellor, was a close friend of Schuster's. In an e-mail, he described his experience playing in a dixieland band that performs for the First Day Parade every year. "It is a marvelous experience riding up Boylston Street on a fire engine playing dixieland to a crowd of sometimes as many as a million spectators, cheering,



Dave Pietro, a famous Massachusetts jazz player, stars in the MIT Concert Band performance in Kresge last Saturday.

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diving second at NEW-
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WORLD & NATION

U.S. Forces Fire Missiles Into Somalia at a Kenyan

By Jeffrey Gettleman
and Eric Schmitt

THE NEW YORK TIMES NAIROBI, KENYA

American naval forces fired missiles into southern Somalia on Monday, aiming at what the Defense Department called terrorist targets.

Residents reached by telephone said three civilians were wounded, and that the only other casualties were three dead cows, one dead donkey and a partly destroyed house.

Bryan Whitman, a Pentagon spokesman in Washington, said the target was a "known al-Qaida terrorist."

The missile strike was aimed at Saleh Ali Saleh Nabhan, a Kenyan born in 1979 who is wanted by the FBI for questioning in the nearly simultaneous attacks in 2002 on a hotel in Mombasa, Kenya, and on an Israeli airliner taking off from there, said three American officials, who spoke on the condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak publicly about the strike.

An American military official said the naval attack Monday was carried out with at least two Tomahawk cruise missiles fired from a submarine. The official said the missiles were believed to have hit their targets. Witnesses on the ground, though, described the attack differently.

Iran's President, in Iraq, Calls for a U.S. Exit

By Solomon Moore
and Mudhafer Al-Husaini

THE NEW YORK TIMES BAGHDAD

President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad of Iran, on the second day of his visit here, on Monday called for the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Iraqi soil and said their presence was the root of Iraq's instability and violence.

Ahmadinejad, the first Iranian president to come to Iraq since the two nations fought a brutal war in the 1980s, contended that Iraq is ready to assume full control of its affairs and that the presence of the U.S. military served its own national interests, and not Iraqi goals.

"The people of this area get nothing from the occupation here except damage, sabotage, destruction, insults, and degradation for the people of this area," said Ahmadinejad during a news conference in Baghdad on Monday. "All of the people here want those forces to go back home."

Memo Gives Canada's Account Of Meeting on Nafta

By Michael Luo

THE NEW YORK TIMES

The denials were full-throated and sweeping when Sen. Barack Obama's campaign mobilized last week to refute a report that a senior campaign official had provided back-channel reassurances to the Canadian government soft-pedaling the candidate's tough talk on the North American Free Trade Agreement.

Obama has railed about NAFTA while campaigning in Ohio, where many blame the accord for an exodus of jobs, even agreeing at last week's Democratic debate with Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton that the United States should consider opting out of the accord if it could not be renegotiated.

But a memo surfaced Monday, obtained by the Associated Press, revealing Austan Goolsbee, a University of Chicago economics professor and Obama's senior economic policy adviser, met with officials at the Canadian consulate in Chicago last month. According to the memo's author, Joseph De Mora, a political and economic affairs officer in the consulate, Goolsbee assured them that protectionist rhetoric from Obama on the trail "is more reflective of political maneuvering than policy."

Last-Minute Politicking Before Texas and Ohio

By Elisabeth Bumiller
and John M. Broder

THE NEW YORK TIMES

Sens. Hillary Rodham Clinton and Barack Obama battled over national security and trade in a frantic burst of last-minute campaigning on Monday as Clinton accused Obama of deception and new evidence of discord surfaced within her own camp.

With less than 24 hours to go before voting in Ohio, Texas, Vermont and Rhode Island, Clinton's campaign released a television advertisement accusing Obama of being AWOL from his chairmanship of a Senate oversight committee on the forces fighting in Afghanistan. "He was too busy running for president to hold even one hearing," the ad said.

Obama's campaign, counterpunching, said Clinton had herself missed important hearings on Afghanistan before the Senate Armed Services Committee last month.

The day was the latest installment in the riveting drama between two formidable, historic candidates: the first woman to be a serious contender for president and the charismatic young black man who has packed arenas across the country and over-

taken Clinton in many polls and the delegate count.

Officials predicted a record turnout among voters in Texas.

Clinton, facing calls from some Democrats to quit the race should she perform poorly on Tuesday after 11 straight losses, appeared almost defiant at the start of her day in Ohio, declaring, "I'm just getting warmed up."

Then she charged that one of Obama's senior advisers had told Canadian officials that Obama's opposition to the North American Free Trade Agreement, or NAFTA, was largely a political tactic, not a serious policy position. Obama denied that he was sending back-channel messages to the Canadians and said the Clinton campaign was "throwing the kitchen sink" at him.

Clinton had her own internal problems as reports of dysfunction and finger-pointing rumbled through her operation.

In an e-mail message sent over the weekend to The Los Angeles Times, Mark Penn, Clinton's chief strategist and pollster, appeared to be distancing himself from the campaign's operations when he said he had "no

direct authority in the campaign." Penn described himself as merely "an outside message adviser with no campaign staff reporting to me."

Penn is a long-time friend of Bill and Hillary Clinton and serves — as he invariably describes himself — as the campaign's chief strategist. This means he is involved in directing the message presented by Clinton in her speeches and campaign advertisements, and the overall strategic thrusts of the campaign. He has also often served as the voice of the campaign — appearing on television and giving interviews pressing Clinton's cause.

Obama faced continuing questions on Monday about his relationship with the developer Antoin Rezko, who is on trial in Chicago, accused of exploiting political relationships with the Illinois governor, Rod R. Blagojevich, to obtain millions of dollars in kickbacks on state contracts.

Obama is not implicated in any aspect of the case, but Rezko has contributed \$150,000 over the years to Obama's campaigns and helped him purchase a home at the same time Rezko bought an adjoining strip of land he later sold to Obama.

Hamas Celebrates as Israeli Ground Forces Leave Gaza

By Taghreed El-Khodary
and Isabel Kershner

THE NEW YORK TIMES

GAZA CITY, GAZA STRIP

As Israel withdrew its forces from the northern Gaza Strip on Monday after a two-day assault on Hamas militants, and as Palestinians emerged from their houses to inspect the damage, Hamas leaders seemed to be following the playbook of their Lebanese ally, Hezbollah, in its 2006 war with Israel.

Fawzi Barhoum, a spokesman for Hamas in Gaza, said that like Hezbollah, Hamas had "gone from the stone to the rocket."

"What we learned from Hezbollah," he said, "is that resistance is a choice that can work."

The clearest example of echoing Hezbollah came on Monday when thousands attended a so-called victory rally, and Mahmoud Zahar, an

influential Hamas leader, briefly came out of hiding to tell the rallygoers that his organization would rebuild any house that had been damaged by the Israeli strikes.

Holding up his group as the source of reconstruction as well as resistance is precisely the message that brought local and regional acclaim to Hassan Nasrallah, the Hezbollah leader, when his organization faced down Israeli attacks in the summer of 2006 through rocket barrages on Israel.

The latest surge in hostilities between Israel and militants in the Gaza Strip left 116 Palestinians dead, according to Dr. Moawiyah Hassanain of the Palestinian Health Ministry in Gaza, making it the deadliest fighting in Gaza in a year. Two Israeli soldiers were killed in the fighting in northern Gaza on Saturday, and one Israeli

civilian was killed last Wednesday by rocket fire in the border town of Sderot.

But more than 200 rockets have been fired at Israel since Wednesday, according to Israeli military officials, including at least 21 longer-range Katyusha-style rockets, which are manufactured outside Gaza and brought into the strip. Palestinians and Israelis see the use of those rockets as another illustration of the growing similarity between Hezbollah and Hamas, the militant Islamic organization that controls Gaza.

"We are very concerned that the role model for Hamas in Gaza is the Lebanese Hezbollah," said Mark Regev, a spokesman for Israel's prime minister, Ehud Olmert, when asked about parallels between this conflict and the one with Hezbollah.

WEATHER

Rain Tuesday and Wednesday

By Angela Zalucha
STAFF METEOROLOGIST

An intensifying low pressure system moving into our area from the Ohio Valley will bring numerous rain showers, possibly heavy at times, Tuesday afternoon through Wednesday afternoon. The storm center is predicted to track to our west, which means we will experience relatively warm air.

While Boston and areas to the south will see all rain, the rest of New England may see a mix of freezing rain (precipitation falling as rain and freezing upon hitting the ground), sleet (melted snow that has refrozen as it falls through a colder layer of air), and a little snow. Strong winds are also possible Wednesday morning.

High pressure on Wednesday night will mean a clear sky Wednesday night and Thursday. Another, weaker storm system threatens to affect the region Friday.

Extended Forecast

Today: Cloudy with a chance of rain in the evening. High 50°F (10°C).

Tonight: Rain. Low 37°F (3°C).

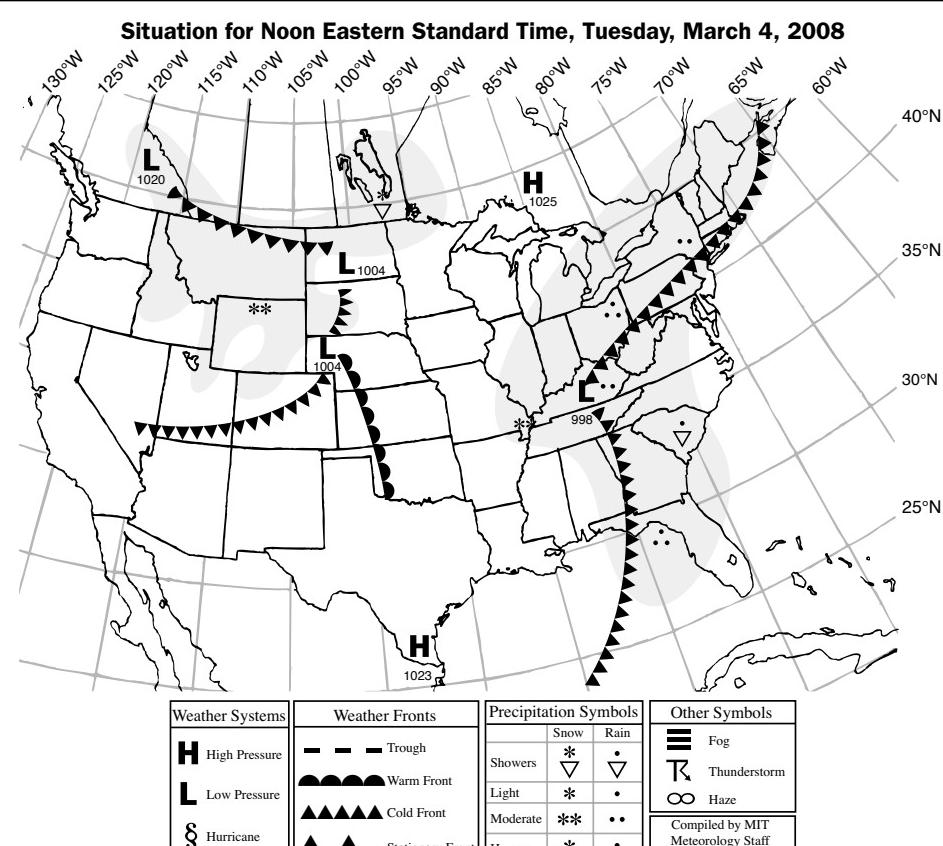
Tomorrow: Rain. Breezy in the morning. High 47°F (8°C).

Tomorrow night: Becoming clear. Low 35°F (2°C).

Thursday: Mostly sunny. High 46°F (8°C).

Thursday night: Partly cloudy. Low 33°F (1°C).

Friday: Mostly cloudy with a chance of rain. High 43°F (6°C).



Investors' Flight to Oil Pushes Price to a Record

By Jad Mouawad
THE NEW YORK TIMES

Capping a relentless rise in recent years, oil prices hit an all-time high during the day on Monday, then pulled back to close below the record.

The day's highest trading price, \$103.95 a barrel on the New York Mercantile Exchange, broke the record set in April 1980 during the second oil shock. That price, \$39.50 a barrel, equals \$103.76 today, when adjusted for inflation.

The surge in energy prices is taking place as investors seek refuge in commodities to offset a slowing economy and a declining dollar. Analysts pointed out that financial institutions like pension funds and hedge funds are also buying oil and other commodities like gold as hedges against a rise in inflation.

That trend is expected to continue, especially after Ben S. Bernanke, the chairman of the Federal Reserve, signaled last week that he was ready to cut interest rates further to bolster economic growth, despite rising consumer prices.

"When investors lose confidence in the central bank, they tend to look

for hard assets," said Philip K. Verleger, an economist and oil expert. "The Fed's capitulation on inflation is driving investors to commodities."

For example, CALPERS, the California Public Employees' Retirement System, the largest U.S. pension fund, said last week that it might increase its commodities investments sixteenfold to \$7.2 billion through 2010, to benefit from an across-the-board surge in commodities like gold, silver, oil and wheat.

The latest catalyst for the spike in energy prices has been the recent fall in the value of the dollar, analysts said. Currency traders are selling dollars and buying euros to take advantage of the difference in interest rates between the United States and Europe.

After steep declines last week, the dollar dropped to a record \$1.5274 against the euro on Monday before recovering somewhat. It also fell to its lowest level in three years against the Japanese yen.

Like many commodities, oil is priced in dollars on the international market. A falling dollar tends to buoy oil prices in part because consumers using stronger currencies, like the

euro or yen, can afford to pay more per barrel.

"The question for oil is, Where is the dollar going?" said Roger Diwan, a managing director at PFC Energy, a consulting firm in Washington. "That's going to be the main market mover in the short term."

Since 2000, oil prices have more than quadrupled as strong growth in demand from the United States and Asia outstripped the ability of oil producers to increase their output.

The rising prices of the past decade failed to dent global economic growth as consumers absorbed the higher costs. Even now, with the U.S. economy slowing markedly, the trend has not slowed much. Global oil consumption is still expected to increase by 1.4 million barrels a day this year, driven by demand in China and the Middle East.

Still, today's market climate is markedly different from the energy crises of the 1970s and 1980s. These were brought about by sudden interruptions in oil supplies, like the 1973 Arab oil embargo, the Iranian revolution of 1979 or the outbreak of the war between Iran and Iraq in 1980.

Security Council Votes for New Sanctions Against Iran

**By Warren Hoge
and Elaine Sciolino**
THE NEW YORK TIMES

UNITED NATIONS

The Security Council on Monday adopted its third resolution imposing sanctions on Iran for its refusal to cease enriching uranium, an activity that the West suspects Iran may be using to create fuel for a nuclear weapon.

The previous two measures gained unanimous support of the 15-member panel, but in Monday's balloting, Indonesia abstained, saying it "remained to be convinced of the efficacy of adopting additional sanctions at this juncture." Fourteen countries voted in favor.

The resolution authorizes inspections of cargo to and from Iran that is suspected of carrying prohibited equipment, tightens the monitoring of Iranian financial institutions and extends travel bans and asset freezes against persons and companies involved in the nuclear program.

It adds 13 names to the existing list of five individuals and 12 companies subject to travel and asset restrictions. The new names include

people with direct responsibility for building fast-spinning centrifuges that enrich uranium ore and a brigadier general engaged in "efforts to get around the sanctions" in the two earlier resolutions.

Enriched uranium is used to power nuclear reactors for civilian use. But highly enriched uranium can be used as fuel for a nuclear weapon.

The new measure also bans all trade and supply of so-called dual-use items, materials and technologies that can be adapted for military as well as civilian ends.

Earlier Monday in Vienna, Mohamed ElBaradei, the director of the International Atomic Energy Agency, the U.N. nuclear monitor, said newly disclosed intelligence reports that Iran had secretly researched how to make nuclear weapons were of "serious concern" and would be pursued by his office.

"Iran continues to maintain that these alleged weaponization studies related to conventional weapons only are fabricated," ElBaradei said in a speech to the agency's 35-country policy-making body. "However a full-fledged examination of this

issue has yet to take place."

The studies were described last Monday, in a briefing by Olli Heinonen, the agency's senior inspector.

They included sketches and a video that appeared to have come from Iran's own military laboratories, and Heinonen said they showed work "not consistent with any application other than the development of a nuclear weapon."

In a thinly veiled criticism of Iran, ElBaradei said, "I urge Iran to be as active and cooperative as possible in working with the agency to clarify this matter of serious concern."

Iran says the agency's findings support its claim that its nuclear program is solely for peaceful purposes, and it has rejected all suggestions that it was studying how to make nuclear weapons.

Iran's ambassador to the agency, Ali Asghar Soltanieh, called the intelligence data "forged and fabricated" and denounced the new Council resolution Monday as "irresponsible" and "an arrow aiming at the heart of" the atomic energy agency.

Good News or Not, Companies in U.S. Are Saving Piles of Cash

By Diana B. Henriques
THE NEW YORK TIMES

At least someone knows how to fill a piggy bank.

Unlike most American consumers, whose failure to save has exasperated economists for years, the typical American corporation has increased its savings so sharply that it probably has enough cash on hand to completely pay off its debts.

That should be good news in an economy unsettled by rising energy prices, tightening credit, gyrating stock prices and declining values for the dollar and the family home. Indeed, the Federal Reserve chairman, Ben S. Bernanke, cited strong corporate balance sheets as a bright spot in the darkening forecast he presented to Congress last week.

Some analysts also speculate that these cash-rich companies may start sharing their wealth with investors through special dividends, providing welcome stimulus for the economy.

Corporate spending on equipment and other capital expendi-

tures has declined as savings have soared, suggesting that companies could stimulate the economy now by going on a hiring and spending spree. But that raises worries among some analysts that companies will spend their cash unwisely, making them more vulnerable in the future.

The increase over the last decade in the amount of cash, as a percent of total assets, for the companies in the Standard & Poor's 500-stock index has been dramatic. One study shows that the average cash ratio doubled from 1998 to 2004 and the median ratio more than tripled, while debt levels fell. According to S&P, the total cash held by companies in its industrial index exceeded \$600 billion in February, up from about \$203 billion in 1998.

Rene M. Stulz, who holds the Reese chair in banking and monetary economics at Fisher College of Business at Ohio State University, said research he conducted with two other professors on corporate cash levels since 1980 indicates that growing cash holdings over that pe-

riod most likely reflect the simple fact that the world became a much riskier place for business.

"Companies responded to those rising risks by saving more," said Stulz, whose study excluded utilities and financial companies because their cash reserves are monitored by regulators.

An even longer savings trend was spotted by Jason DeSena Trennert, managing partner and chief investment strategist at Strategas Research Partners in New York, who said his own rough examination of corporate balance sheets shows that "cash, as a percent of total assets, is as high as it's been since the 1960s."

The ledgers of many individual companies bear out these findings. For example, the cash ratio at Paychex — cash and short-term investments as a percent of total assets — has more than doubled, from less than 30 percent in 1988 to more than 70 percent by last summer. Over the same period, Apple's cash ratio grew to more than 60 percent, from just over 38 percent.

Mass. Speaker Lambastes Patrick on Casino Jobs

By Sean P. Murphy
THE BOSTON GLOBE

Massachusetts House Speaker Salvatore F. DiMasi stepped up his attacks Monday on Governor Deval Patrick's proposal to license three resort casinos in Massachusetts, accusing the governor and his staff of failing to do their homework and calling Patrick's prediction that it would generate 30,000 new construction jobs "absurd."

The unusually harsh critique from DiMasi, who until now has said only that he was skeptical of Patrick's plan, signaled that the speaker is preparing for a no-holds-barred fight as the House plans hearings on the governor's proposal.

"The governor's arguments for casinos are clearly losing credibility," DiMasi said in a written statement.

DiMasi was reacting to a report published in Sunday's Globe that detailed how Patrick's prediction of 30,000 new construction jobs, 10,000 each from three \$1 billion casinos, rested solely on a gambling industry estimate and appeared excessively optimistic.

The report said that just 2,600 new construction jobs have been generated by the \$1.5 billion expansion of two casinos in Connecticut. The story also quoted an independent financial analyst who said that 4,000 to 5,000 new construction jobs appeared more reasonable for three casinos statewide.

Although his administration defended its estimate, Patrick downplayed the significance of the estimate, even though he cited it as evidence of gambling's economic benefits in his State of the State speech Jan. 24.

Europe's Journey to the Center of the Space Station

By Warren E. Leary
THE NEW YORK TIMES

Europe is set to significantly increase its involvement with the International Space Station with the launching of a large new spacecraft that is to regularly supply the outpost with fuel, oxygen and other cargo.

The first of the new Automatic Transfer Vehicles, dubbed Jules Verne after the famous French author, is to lift off Sunday from a launch site in French Guiana on a week's long checkout flight before docking with the station in early April.

The almost 21-ton robot vessel, also known as the ATV, will be the largest payload ever launched by Europe's largest rocket, a beefed-up version of the Ariane 5 built by the commercial launch company Arianespace. Along with carrying more than 10 tons of experimental equipment, fuel, water, food and other supplies, Jules Verne represents a major new role and more responsibilities for Europe in the space station project.

Jean-Jacques Dordain, director general of the European Space Agency, said the inauguration of ATV flights — along with last month's delivery of the Columbus science module and activation of a European control center — cements Europe's major new role in space.

"This makes us full partners and a significant player in the space station and space in general," Dordain said of his organization, which represents 17 European nations. The supply vehicle, Columbus laboratory and other components represent Europe's investment of more than \$7 billion in the station project.

Antibiotics Questioned in Care at Life's End

By Nicholas Bakalar
THE NEW YORK TIMES

A yearlong study is raising questions about the widespread use of antibiotics in nursing homes to treat infections in patients with terminal dementia a treatment that the authors suggest is of dubious value to the patients and may be dangerous in the long run.

The study found that two-thirds of the patients received antibiotics and that 40 percent of that group received them in the last two weeks of life.

Antibiotics are often prescribed for illnesses against which they are ineffective, the authors say, but even when they are properly used, the elderly and frail can be particularly susceptible to their side effects. Intravenous administration of the drugs, common in the people in this study, can be extremely uncomfortable.

And there is the risk that widespread antibiotic use can lead to the emergence of drug-resistant germs, a significant and growing public health problem. Previous studies have found that as many as 40 percent of patients in nursing homes harbor drug-resistant bacteria.

For the study, published Feb. 25 in *The Archives of Internal Medicine*, researchers tracked antibiotic use among 214 patients in 21 nursing homes near Boston. Seventy percent had advanced Alzheimer's disease, and the rest had other kinds of severe dementia.

Gene Map Becomes a Luxury Item

By Nicholas Bakalar
THE NEW YORK TIMES

On a cold day in January, Dan Stoicescu, a millionaire living in Switzerland, became the second person in the world to buy the full sequence of his own genetic code.

He is also among a relatively small group of individuals who could afford the \$350,000 price tag.

Stoicescu is the first customer of Knome, a company based in Cambridge, Mass., that has promised to parse his genetic blueprint by spring. A Chinese executive has signed on for the same service with Knome's partner, the Beijing Genomics Institute, the company said.

Scientists have so far unraveled only a handful of complete human genomes, all financed by governments, foundations and corporations in the name of medical research. But as the cost of genome sequencing goes from stratospheric to merely very expensive, it is piquing the interest of a new clientele.

"I'd rather spend my money on my genome than a Bentley or an airplane," said Stoicescu, 56, a biotechnology entrepreneur who retired two years ago after selling his company. He says he will check discoveries about genetic disease risk against his genome sequence daily, "like a stock portfolio."

OPINION



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The next credit crisis...

MARSHALL SAMPSON
The Clarion-Independent
Cartoon: MARSHALL SAMPSON



CAMPUS LIFE: RANTS AND RAVES

Let's be honest, February sucked. Here at MIT, we were subjected to absolutely miserable weather and the resumption of hell, which the administration innocently refers to as "classes." In the real world, or at least the world outside MIT, we witnessed nightmares such as the Patriots losing the Super Bowl, Britney and Jamie Lynne spiraling downward faster than anyone thought possible, and, oh yeah — numerous foreign and domestic government issues. We can't remember a time when the collective student body sported more frowns or played more emo music, and included in this sad state of affairs is *The Tech*'s staff.

Woes of a Premed

By S. Campbell Proehl

This past December, on a lonely afternoon in the building 12 Athena Cluster, I finally decided what I wanted to do with my life. I filled out my Prehealth Advisor Request Form, available as a PDF on the Careers Office Web page. "The MIT Careers Office (MITCO) is now accepting prehealth advisor requests for individuals wishing to enter medical or other health profession schools in Fall 2009," the



Web site stated. I thought, this is nning on entering! writing eight es- plication — not an reience, considering I filled out the GPA and course requirements form, and indi- cated I was interested in applying to MD/PhD programs. Then I ad- dressed the envelope, sealed it with love, and placed it in the mailbox. (There's no way to apply online).

As of last week, I realized I hadn't heard anything about being assigned an advisor. Maybe they never received my application, I worried. Within ten seconds, the premed sweat was upon me — I felt the sudden, overwhelming blood rush that we medical school hopefuls feel at stressful times, like when the professor announces the average on a 5.12 exam was a C. I calmed myself down. They can't deny you a premed advisor, I told myself reassuringly — you pay \$46,000 a year to come here. Plus, they want you to succeed.

I walked over to the Careers Office and inquired about the status of my application. "I'm sorry, but you'll have to wait for this slow software to load before I can check that,"

the man behind the desk said. Four minutes later I was still standing there when he added, "I was not kidding; it's really slow." Finally, the woman in charge of pre-health advising returned from her lunch break. He passed the task to her.

"Are you a second semester sophomore?" she asked. "No, I'm a second semester junior." I noticed the look on her face; it wasn't reassuring. The corners of her mouth had dropped and she made one of those what-I'm-about-to-tell-you-isn't-good clicking sounds. "You've been placed on a waiting list," she said. A waiting list? I developed a hot flash. A WAITING LIST? "May I ask what my chances are of receiving a prehealth advisor?" I said calmly, "Would you put them below 50%?" I wanted, I needed her to quantify my chances. This was my future, and I wanted numbers.

"Well, I can't really put a number on that."

"I'm sorry," I replied, "But I just made up my mind this fall that I want to go to medical school. Are you saying that because I didn't decide this during sophomore year that I can't get an advisor?"

I'll admit, this was a little pointed. It wasn't this woman's fault.

Let us pause here while I pose a question: How many nineteen-year-olds know what they want to do with their lives? Most students at other schools don't even declare their majors until spring of their second year. I'm impressed that I've decided this soon. Clearly, though, the Careers Office is not.

One would think that in circumstances like this, they might bump juniors to the top of the list and make the sophomores wait a couple of months. Sounds pretty democratic to me. But, then again, when was the last time my \$46,000 a year bought me anything other than a lot of homework and a whole lot of misery?

Oh, the woes of a premed.

Never Say That Again

By Caroline Huang
CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

Ever heard a phrase that made you absolutely cringe inside? The most obvious offender this week was "Asante Samuel signs with Eagles," but there are far more. Think of anything that Howard Stern says, most of what President Bush says, some of what your parents say, and a little of what your "over-sharing" friends say. Here, for your reading pleasure, is a list of the phrases that have come up in conversations in the past seven days that I really wish hadn't. If you have ever used these phrases, please, PLEASE never say them again.

Wintry mix

By itself, snow is cool, literally and figuratively. It's gorgeous when draped over trees, and it makes football infinitely better.

By itself, rain is nifty too. It's refreshing on a hot summer day, and it delights desert dwellers and gardeners alike.

Together, however, rain + snow = unfortunate circumstances. Car accidents, nasty spills, and soggy, slushy shoes are just three of a litany of complaints. And that's before mentioning the dreary, gray characteristic of the sky.

Even worse, "wintry mix" seems to be the favorite cop-out of meteorologists everywhere. Rather than guess at the type of precipitation, meteorologists settle for the easy way out: a catchall term. How is our society supposed to preach accountability if our weather men and weather women aren't held to the same standards?

Can we talk?/We need to talk

From a brief, completely unscientific, and absolutely not random survey of guys I know, there is no combination of words that strikes more fear into their hearts. "Can we talk?" engenders terror akin to the wrath of God. Really, when was the last time you said one of

these phrases, only to be greeted with a chipper smile and a cheery comment?

Apparently, the scary part is that there is no indication as to the topic of conversation — "talking" can be about anything from a book to a breakup. And talking can involve the dreaded F-word — feelings. In fact, I'm growing more terrified of talking to people as I write this ... so don't take it personally if I choose to deal with everything like a fifth-grader: either over e-mail or by passing notes.

Just for kicks, if you want to completely freak someone out, throw those words out and then casually glance up at his or her face (but particularly his). This works far better if you have some way of digitally recording said expression. As for what you're going to talk about, you can always make it #5 of that problem set you're working on. Did you get 0.48 too?

Chill out

Could there be a less effective way of telling a person to relax? "Chill out" is one of those phrases that immediately puts the (pick one: stressed, busy, overwhelmed, productive ...) person on the defensive. Do you really expect someone to say, "Why yes, I agree. I am stressed and I should take a break. Thank you for bringing it to my attention!" rather than, "Why the hell won't you leave me alone?" Yeah, not so much.

In fact, I'm becoming stressed out just thinking about people trying to tell me to relax. Why the hell won't you leave me alone?

Be nice/If you can't say something nice, don't say anything at all

Clearly, the person who said this has never taken part in DAT (Designated Asshole Time), more commonly known as time set aside daily for making fun of people. While I do not advocate slander or libel (at least, not in writing — avoiding lawsuits would be ideal), there is

So, in the spirit of healthy habits,

we've decided to get a few things off our chests in the hopes that we'll move on. At the very least, our psychotherapists will be pleased that we've transitioned from passive-aggressive to just aggressive.

—Caroline Huang

Not Even Fit For a Last Meal

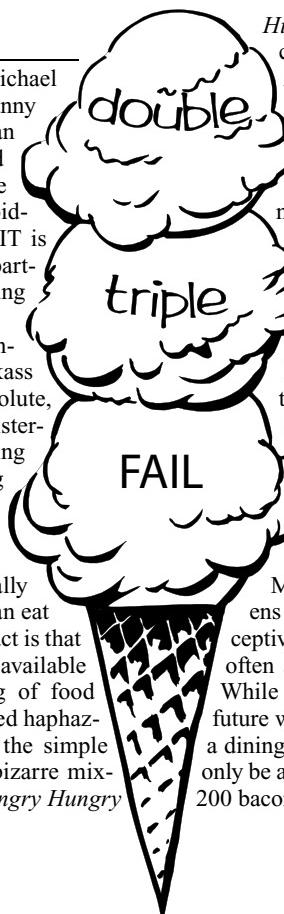
By Kevin Wang
STAFF WRITER

MIT food is a lot like Michael Bolton's music — it's kind of funny how bad it is at first, but after an extremely short while it gets old and eventually kills you. While part of this is due to the unavoidable nature of college food, MIT is noticeably lacking in one department: real, all-you-can-eat dining halls.

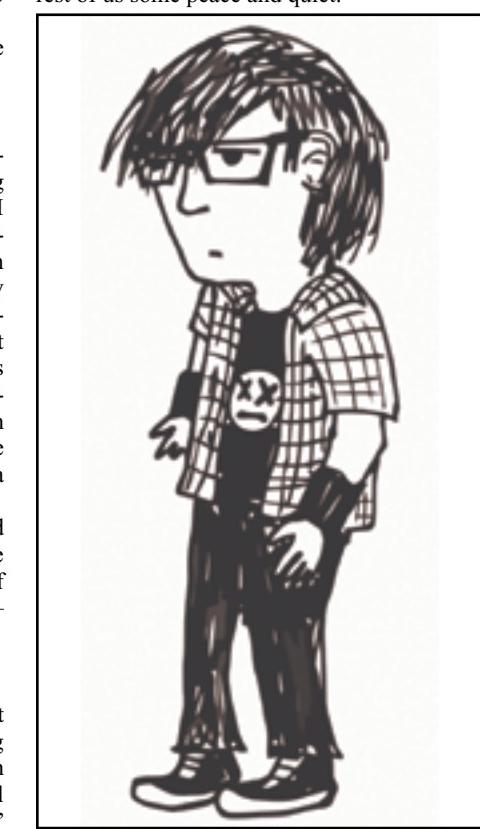
Dining halls are a shining beacon of all-that-is-kickass about the modern world: absolute, total gluttony delivered at blistering speeds. The beautiful thing about an all-you-can-eat dining hall is its versatility — one can eat nothing but salad, or realize that "Dining hall, featuring a self-serve ice cream bar" really means "all the ice cream you can eat before you puke." The simple fact is that the decentralized nature of the available food supplies — a smattering of food trucks and small eateries dumped haphazardly across campus — turns the simple act of procuring lunch into a bizarre mixture of *Where's Waldo?* and *Hungry Hungry*

Hippos. While this is certainly exciting — after all, *Hungry Hungry Hippos* is awesome — it would be great if there were consistent dining halls so that students on the run wouldn't need to recreate Paleolithic hunter-gatherer techniques on a daily basis, including the parts where you get speared by competitors for food and starve to death from lack of sustenance.

Mercifully, MIT has been kind enough to furnish its dormitories with kitchens in lieu of dining halls. What a pleasant turn of events! Now MIT students far and wide can use all of their extra free time to coo- OH WAIT, MIT KIDS HAVE LESS FREE TIME THAN A DEATH ROW INMATE IN TEXAS. Giving us kitchens is like giving Caltech kids contraceptives — at the end of the day, how often are they really going to use them? While perhaps some class in the distant future will be able to enjoy the glory that is a dining hall, it seems that for now we will only be able to eat meals consisting solely of 200 bacon slices in our dreams.



Unless, of course, you insist on blasting Lifehouse or Fall Out Boy at all hours of the day. In that case, quit being emo and give the rest of us some peace and quiet.



See next page for more
Rants and Raves

...MORE COMPLAINING

No Soup For You!

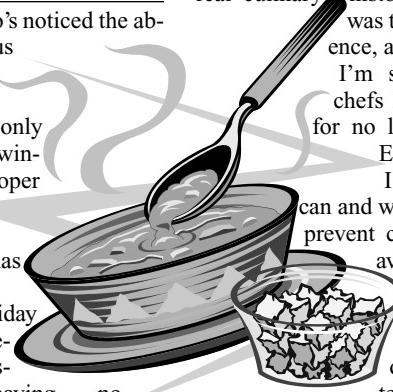
By Michael T. Lin
STAFF COLUMINIST

I can't be the only one who's noticed the absence of the formerly-famous clam chowder that used to be served in on-campus eateries every Friday. I can't be the only one who came back from winter break aching for some proper clam chowder only to find that it's nowhere to be found on campus. So where has it gone?

Last semester, every Friday was made extra special because I already knew by Thursday night what I would be having — no, enjoying — for lunch the following day. I bragged to everybody at other colleges about

how incredible it was to be living in a place with real culinary history. For me, clam chowder was the pinnacle of that experience, and now it's gone.

I'm sure that the on-campus chefs have an excellent reason for no longer serving their New England clam chowder, and I understand that things can and will necessarily happen that prevent certain things from being available forever. Besides, it isn't as if the entire city of Boston is devoid of places to find clam chowder. But I will still shed a tear from time to time for having to tell myself every Friday at lunch time, "No soup for you."



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Campus Safety

Health Care

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Presidential Election

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Give Me Back My Glove

By Charles Lin
CAMPUS LIFE EDITOR

My glove is lonely. I put him and his brother in my coat pocket when I threw my coat into the room with all the other coats. When I came back, I no longer had a pair of gloves. I had a glove. Uno. One. Singular. Sensation. This is not OK. I am devastated and I blame you for my catastrophic loss. Why?

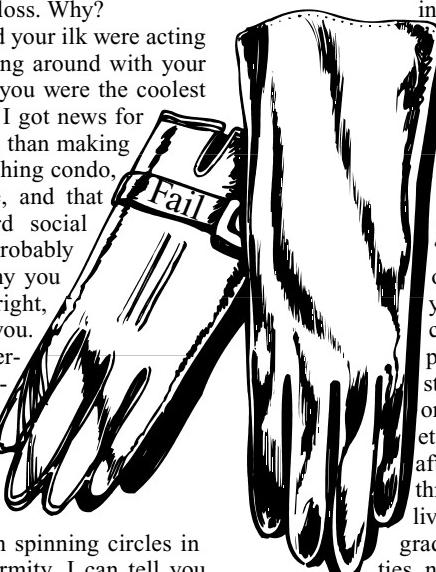
I saw the way you and your ilk were acting at that party. All cavorting around with your beer and cocktails as if you were the coolest thing in the world. Well I got news for you. There's more to life than making six figures, having a bitching condo, summering at the Cape, and that thing you call "upward social mobility". 'course you probably knew this, and that's why you stole my glove. That's right, I know the truth about you. Deep down inside, underneath that svelte two button chalk striped Burberry suit, lives a core of anguish. Beneath that fashionably angular lapel is a heart that yearns for something more than spinning circles in the wheel ruts of conformity. I can tell you want more out of life than speed dating young professionals in the Back Bay. You wake up every morning and say to yourself, "I feel so hollow inside. All I ever do is downsize companies and move money from column A to column B."

This existential crisis has lead you into a world of petty thievery. Mergers and Acquisitions has made you numb to the twists and turns of the world, desensitized from everyday human emotion — you feel as if the walls are

closing in on you, trapping you in the glass jar of 9 to 5 days and country club weekends. You had to lash out, it was only natural for you. You turned to stealing accessories from guests at cocktail parties. But it will never be enough. What's next? Burglarizing bags? Pilfering pearls? Like an addict, you'll only spiral deeper and deeper. Soon you'll descend into securities fraud. You'll get a rush out of defrauding the elderly.

Yes. I know the truth. Stealing my glove was a secret cry for help. You're begging for someone to give your life direction, for someone to tell you "no" again. You're sick of enablers. I understand you, I really do. Now can I have my glove back please? I'm a poor grad student. Steal from someone in your own tax bracket. I know why you came after me, you saw me as a threat. You saw someone living the carefree life of a grad student, no responsibilities, no money, no wants or desires. You saw it and you envied it, you desired it, and when you couldn't have it, you sought to destroy it by slightly inconveniencing me.

Well, I got news for you buddy, your plan won't work. You aren't the first I-banker to crack like an egg and you won't be the last. But there's hope. Join the Peace Corps, go back to school, take up alternative medicine, I don't care, just give me my glove back. I need it. My left hand is freezing.



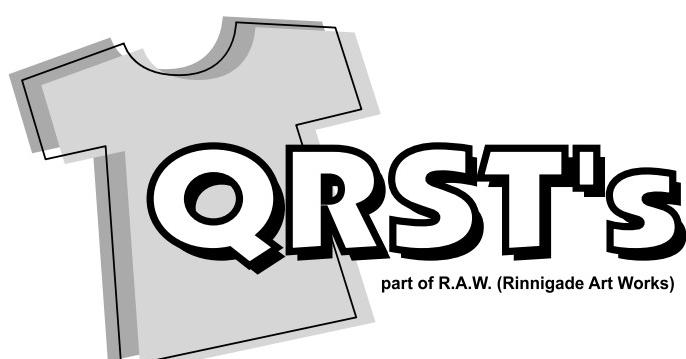
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COMICS FUN PAGES

The
Tech

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7

The Daily Blunderbuss

by Ben Peters

Famous Quote Explained

"An education from MIT is like drinking from a firehouse."



Steal My Comic

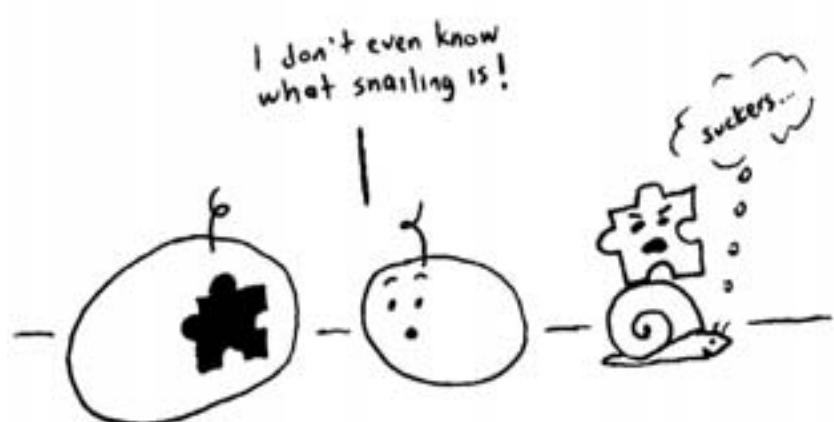
by Michael Ciuffo



Blobbles

by Jason Chan

Quit snailing my face!



Remember, this is how Blobbles works: you send me a caption, and I make a drawing out of it. blobbles@mit.edu

sudoku

© Puzzles by Pappocom

Instructions: Fill in the grid so that each column, row, and 3 by 3 grid contains exactly one of each of the digits 1 through 9.
Solution on page 11.

		3					6		9					
6			7				1							
				3				4	7					
8							3				1			
					4	8	9							
				6										
3	2				5									
			4				1		8					
5		9								4				

Solution, tips, and computer program at <http://www.sudoku.com>

Crossword Puzzle

Solution, page 15

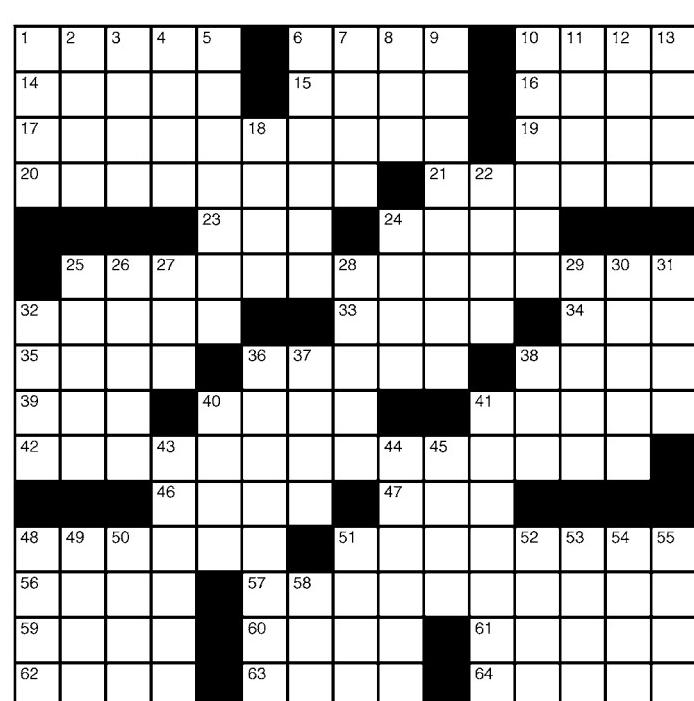
ACROSS
1 "Ninotchka" star
6 Berserk
10 "Ring of Fire" singer
14 Tata, Gigi
15 Checkout delay
16 Shells and such
17 Bill
19 Sign on again
20 Coming into prominence
21 Waiting room
23 Numbskull
24 Unnerves
25 Bill
32 Leave-taking
33 Gymnast Korbut
34 Bus. honcho
35 Radius neighbor
36 Basil concoction
38 Month Leo begins
39 Record

40 John Wayne's nickname
41 No-no
42 Bill
46 Setback
47 Andean gold
48 Like Poe's midnight
51 Regular payments
56 Attain
57 Bill
59 Fictional Jane
60 Tampico water
61 Being dragged
62 Hey, you!
63 Am. Samoa
64 Speaks gratingly

DOWN
1 Rubberneck
2 West or Arkin
3 Ready for picking

4 Pub purchase
5 Alfalfa's group
6 "The Tempest" king
7 Chinese dynasty
8 Half and half?
9 Bogart/Bacall classic
10 Operatic tenor Enrico
11 The last word
12 Complacent
13 Crosby film foil
18 Vapor
22 Killer whale
24 Sudden shock
25 Crayon in
26 Shop talk
27 Balin or Claire
28 Edged (out)
29 Diving acronym
30 Subordinate to
31 Spinning toy

32 Swallow greedily
36 Mild-mannered person
37 Stretches (out)
38 Carrier from Tokyo
40 Portal
41 Potential full house
43 Krypton or Vulcan
44 Close by
45 View from Toledo
48 Low in pitch
49 Flat fish
50 Makes a mistake
51 Boot attachment
52 Sicilian hot spot
53 Zealous enthusiasts
54 Let lapse
55 Puts in some stitches
58 Bring to maturity



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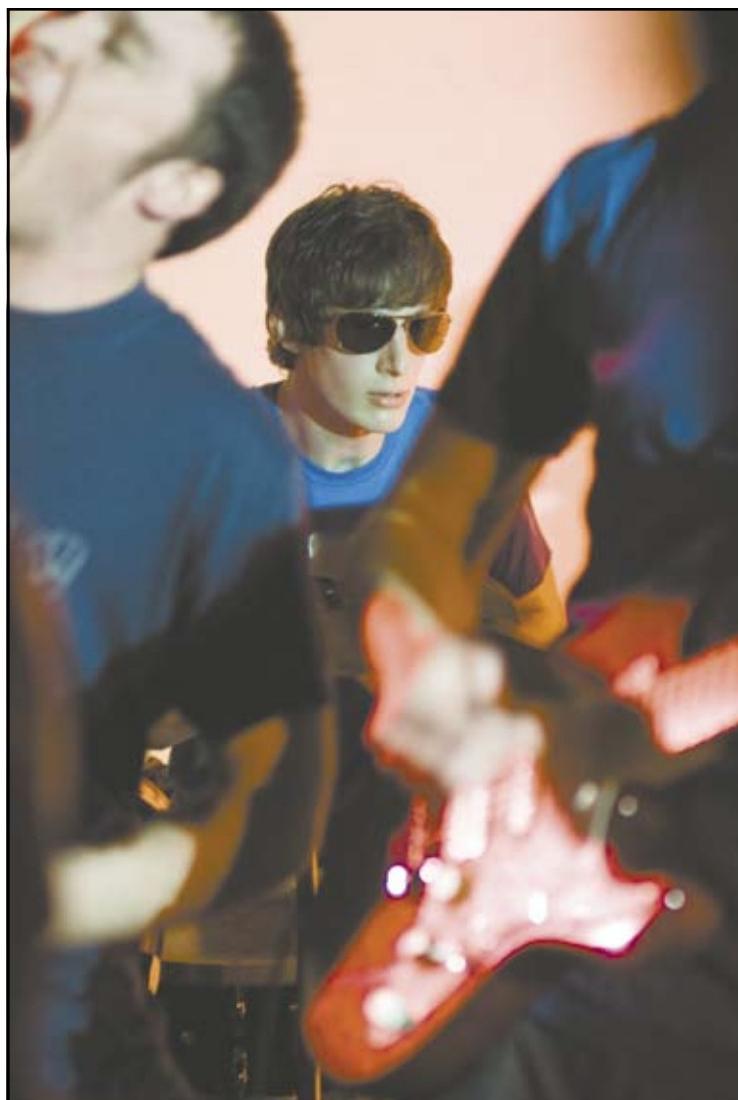
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Senior House hosted the "Sr Haus Rocks" concert this past Saturday, March 1 in the Senior House basement.

(left)
Matthew A. Robertson '08, vocalist for Limited Slip, sings during the opening song in their set.

(counter-clockwise from above)
Limited Slip guitarist Alexander A. Sanchez '08 plays in the red glow of the set lighting.

Jonathan S. Krones '07 and Balaji Mani '10, bassist and drummer for The Pears, hit a note in sync.

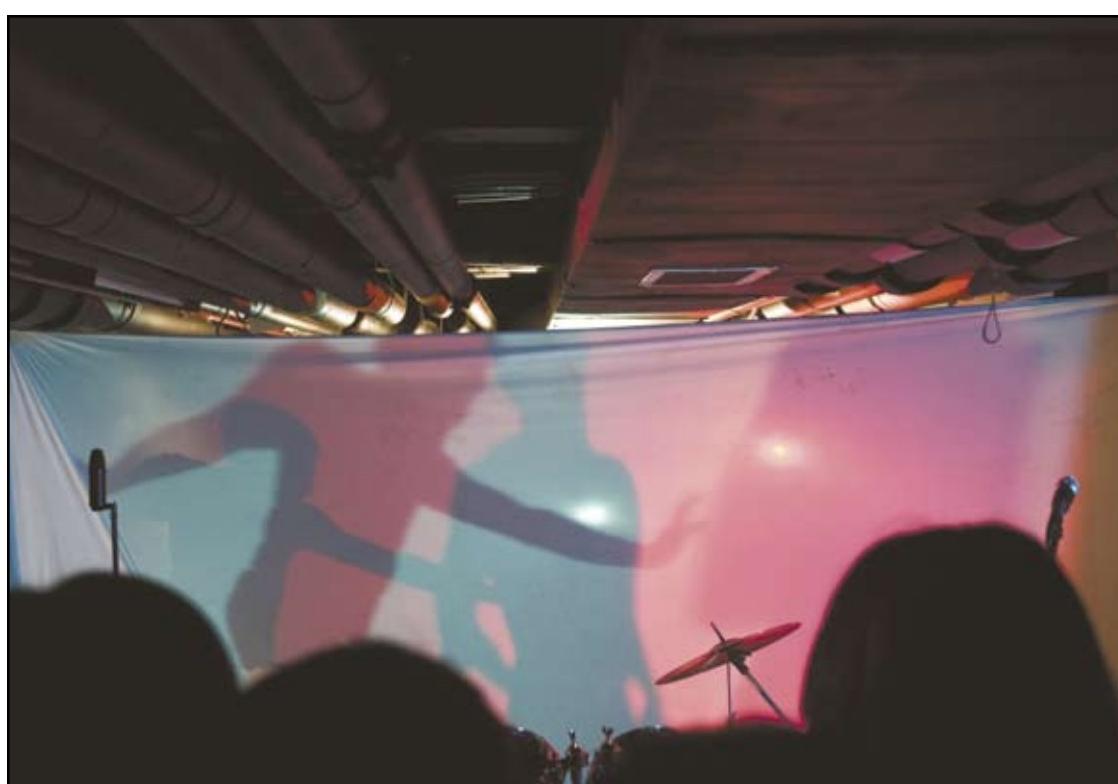
Michael S. Fleder '08 plays drums as Dugan K. Hayes '08 (left) sings and Colin Hill '08 (right) plays rhythm guitar during the Isothermals' set.

The Pears are silhouetted as they change clothes and stretch just prior to the beginning of their set.

The Isothermals' Dugan Hayes gives guitarist Colin Hill a turn on vocals.

Photography by Omari Stephens

Senior Haus Rocks



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Schuster Was a Devoted Thesis Advisor, Respected By Students

Schuster, from Page 1

laughing, being together without the slightest hint of man's inhumanity to man." "Life offers those people few such occasions," he said. "I would guess that none of them know that the giver of that gift included Mark Schuster."

Schuster was first diagnosed with metastatic melanoma four and a half years ago, but he confronted his illness "very bravely," according to Bishwapriya Sanyal, a professor in Schuster's department who became an associate professor with him in 1994. Schuster continued to regularly attend faculty meetings and allowed himself to be photographed even as his condition continued to deteriorate. John de Monchaux, also a DUSP professor, said that "he scarcely dropped any work here."

He was "the most demanding critic of any idea," said de Monchaux, who taught classes with Schuster. "He taught me an enormous

amount in terms of rigor and logic, in terms of how you challenge conventional wisdom." Although he could be very critical of others' work, he challenged ideas so that "those who were supporting them would be able to hone them," said de Monchaux. Offering his "laser-like capacity to detect flaws," Schuster taught a Masters defense class for graduate students.

Schuster was also known for his excellence in teaching. In 1983, he won the Graduate Student Council Award for Outstanding Teaching, and in 2006 he won his department's award for Excellence in Teaching, according to the News Office.

Benjamin P. Solomon-Schwartz G., took two classes with Schuster and was his advisee until January. He said that "[Schuster] cared deeply about students in a way that took their work and interests seriously." Solomon-Schwartz also added that, "Underneath his serious demeanor, he had a great sense of fun."

Ben J. Stone G. had Schuster as his master's thesis advisor. Schuster "had very high expectations for his students," according to Stone. He said that occasionally students were frustrated with Schuster's high bar,

but those students eventually found Schuster's rigor to be well worth it — their theses were much stronger. According to Stone, students other than Schuster's advisees often talked with him to discuss their theses; Schuster was known for being very accessible.

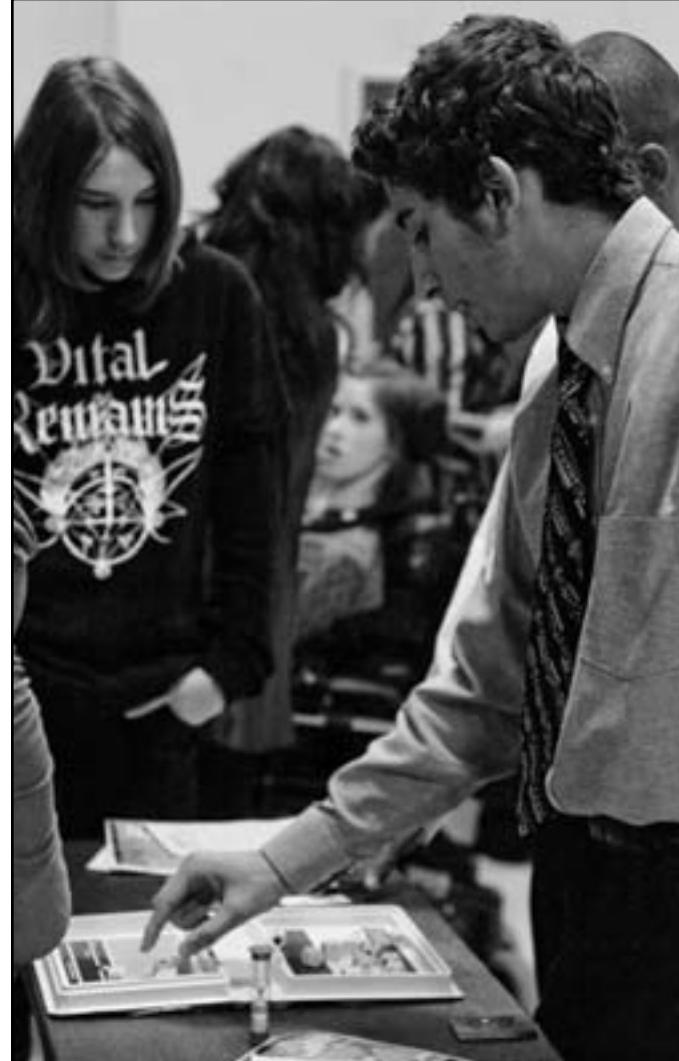
Schuster was actively involved in the Institute's curriculum policy. He served as a member of the Task Force on the Educational Commons since 2004. He was also Chair of the Committee on the Undergraduate Program from 2003 to 2005.

Schuster enjoyed seeing plays with Keyser — they went out less than two days before he died. Keyser said that, "it was evident to everyone, Mark especially, that time was running out." "But he spent that Saturday afternoon the way he would have had cancer not eaten away at his life." "He lived until the light went out."

J. Mark Schuster is survived by his wife, Charlotte Harrison; his son, Luc; his daughter, Leigh; his step-daughter, Alison Watkins; his brother, Neil; and his former wife, Devon Davidson.

Memorial services have not yet been announced.

THANK YOU M.I.T.



RICARDO RAMIREZ—THE TECH
High School student Levi Toledano (right) shows other students how to play On-Sets, a dice game that helps students learn about set theory. The MIT Saturday Engineering and Enrichment Discovery Program held a workshop on Feb. 29 to showcase the Massachusetts Academic League of America, a club where students learn and compete by playing academic games.

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FSILGs Undergo Frequent Safety Checks

Wells, from Page 1

Kaya Miller, the assistant dean of Fraternities, Sororities, and Independent Living Groups and Residential Life Programs, said that FSILGs have multiple safety inspections each year. Each FSILG in Boston is inspected by the fire department and the Boston Inspectional Services Department, said Miller. "Boston Fire does have to approve all lofts and ... sleeping area[s]," said Miller. DU was "current in their inspection," she said.

Miller also said that MIT likely would not issue additional restrictions on FSILGs. “[MIT] doesn’t get into the nuances of what exactly the building needs to be,” she said.

MIT has, however, altered on-campus housing for safety reasons before. In February 2004, MIT banned all flags and banners from the outsides of dormitory windows, allegedly because they posed a fire hazard. MIT also added window restraints — which allowed windows to open only 15 degrees — in the lounges of MacGregor House following the 1990 suicide of Younes Borki '92. The restraints were strengthened in the summer of 1996 after the suicide of Melissa N. Ronge '98. In January of 2000, MIT replaced the restraints with strong metal screens after the Feb. 1999 suicide of Michael P. Manley '02.

Is science important to the government?
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Daily Meditation

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Awards Convocation 2008

Solution to Sudoku								
from page 7								
7	4	3	2	1	8	6	5	9
9	6	2	7	4	5	1	3	8
8	5	1	9	3	6	2	4	7
4	8	7	1	6	2	3	9	5
1	3	5	4	8	9	7	2	6
2	9	6	5	7	3	8	1	4
3	2	8	6	5	4	9	7	1
6	7	4	3	9	1	5	8	2
5	1	9	8	2	7	4	6	3

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Randomites Share Hilarious Stories of Alumni Antics

Random Hall, from Page 1

Throughout these trials, the tight-knit community at Random Hall has prevailed.

Some say Randomites are the weirdos of the Institute, but that's not quite it. Randomites are not weird so much as they are open and fascinated with each other, with life. For them, the dorm is an echo chamber for inside jokes and personal idiosyncrasies.

Random embodies the MIT of public imagination. Like a shag carpet, the dorm's unabsorbedly, charmingly nerdy community accumulates all sorts of cultural detritus. Its corridors run rampant with vigorous — and to the outsider —

bizarre customs: elaborate pranks, hacks to end all hacks, and endless Dungeons and Dragons marathons.

Year after year, newer residents gamely play along, until everyone has forgotten how the traditions began. Take boffing: nobody is exactly sure when or who first started it, but fighting with foam-PVC swords on the roof deck has become a fixture of Random life.

Residents of Random describe it as a "two-holed torus." This is just as confusing as it sounds. Walking around and around the identical floors and narrow hallways brings on a strong, disorienting déjà vu — and then vertigo when you stumble across one of the four plunging staircases.

The only way markers are the decorations on the walls: dinosaur comics, clams, giant women holding guns, games of chess and scrabble stuck to the wall by magnets, and quotes from Kesey and Kerouac. Random's cultural inheritance lives in the building itself.

On Friday night, the celebration is at times nostalgic and exuberant.

In the second floor lounge, a crowd of over thirty sing the birthday dirge: "May the candles on your cake burn like cities in your wake / May your skills with sword and axe outshine those with sheep and yaks." The cake is pink with a thick, shiny icing.

On the third floor, an impromptu dance studio. Three women in blue pleated miniskirts gyrating to a Japanese anime music video.

Pause. A misstep.

They start again, bouncing their hands to the grating Japanese pop.

Pause. Another mistake.

"Okay, stop moving and actually listen to the music for a while," says an annoyed choreographer, a lanky man in a turtleneck.

Pockets of conversation crowd the building's crannies as Randomites former and current swap stories of weird residents, pranks, and domestic wars. Legendary exploits are revisited — but so are stories about everyday hijinks.

Like about the resident who was

so protective of his food that he labeled all his food with his initials — including his eggs, individually. Like about the time they dumped buckets of snow down the stairs, catching people in the head with a man-made avalanche. Like about when someone set a shaving cream trap that emptied a can of foam in the face of anyone foolhardy enough to step through the door.

There also some stories not told. Like the one about a girl on the fourth floor who set herself and nearly the entire dorm on fire six years ago.

From that tragedy, Random seems to have bounced back.

On the fourth floor, two Randomites are trying to make a flaming popsicle, learning in the process that frozen booze does not, in fact, burn.

"I'm starting to doubt that this is even ethanol," says one as he plunges a lighter repeatedly into a spoonful of solid alcohol.

"Let's toss it on the stove to check," the other one suggests. The kitchen is shiny and white, recently cleaned. The gas stove starts up with a CLICK! CLICK! and the chunk of milky white frozen booze ignites instantly. The flame leaps high and nearly singes an eyebrow.

"Yup that was ethanol!" she says.

"Let's try that again," he says.



REBECCA LOH—TECH FILE PHOTO

Random Hall still looks exactly like it did here in 2000; On Feb. 29, Random Hall celebrated its 40th birthday.



RICARDO RAMIREZ—TECH FILE PHOTO

Random Nucleic Acid reaches up 4 stories on the 290 Mass. Ave. side of Random Hall. On Feb. 29, Random celebrated its 40th birthday.

Latke vs. Hamantaschen

The Great Debate of 2008

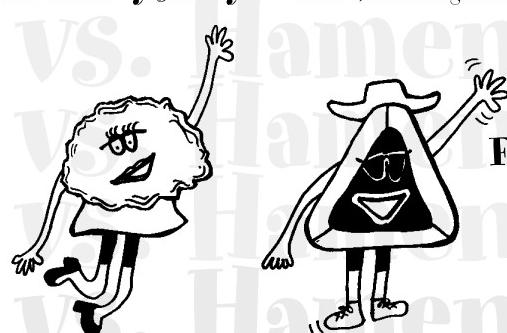
Moderated by Jeremy Wolfe, Brain & Cognitive Sciences

For the Latke

Peter Dourmashkin
Physics

Stephen Van Evera
Political Science

Patrick Winston



For the Hamantaschen

Erik Demaine
EECS

Hazel Sive
Biology

Ari Epstein
Terracepe

Latke & hamantaschen reception follows the debate.

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Latke vs. Hamantaschen

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Culture Shapes The Way Brains Interpret Shapes and Puzzles

Brain, from Page 1

for Brain Health at the University of Texas in Dallas. "The Easterner probably sees more, and the Westerner probably sees less, but in more detail."

In January, researchers led by Trey Hedden and John D. Gabrieli '87 at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology showed that such deeply ingrained habits of thought affect the brains of East Asians and Americans even as they perform simple tasks that involve estimating the length of a line.

Hedden's experiment involved two tasks. In one, subjects eyeballed a line simply to estimate its length — a task that played to American strengths. In another, they estimated the line's length relative to the size of a square — an easier task for the Asians.

Brain scanners measure levels of neural activity by tracking blood flow. The experiment found that though there was no difference in performance — the tasks were very easy — the level of activity in the subjects' brains differed, suggesting different levels of effort.

Areas linked to attention lit up more in the Americans' brains when they worked on the task they tend to find harder, estimating the line's size relative to the square. In Asians, the attention areas lit up more during the harder task — estimating the line's length without comparing it to the square.

Those findings, published in the journal Psychological Science, echo more than a decade of previous experimental research into East-West differences that are so fundamental that people tend not to be consciously aware of them. University of Michigan professor Richard E. Nisbett even wrote a 2003 book about it, "The Geography of Thought."

But brain scan data add new heft to such findings, said Hazel Rose Markus, a psychology professor at Stanford University who collaborated on the Gabrieli paper. Brain findings may help people become aware of deep cultural differences that are normally "so much part of the water that we don't see them," she said.

Such differences have turned up in experiment after experiment. For example:

In one study, researchers offered people a choice among five pens: four red and one green. Easterners are likelier to choose a red pen, while Westerners more often choose the green.

In an experiment measuring how well 8-year-olds could solve puzzles, American children performed best when solving puzzles they had chosen themselves, while Asian children performed best when solving puzzles they were told their mothers had chosen for them, Markus said. American children brought up in an independence-minded culture felt best when they were exercising free choice, she said; while the Asian children assumed that their mothers had their best interests at heart.

When they are tested on details of an underwater scene they recently viewed, Westerners tend to remember more about the biggest fish, while Easterners remember more about the

scene's background.

"Literally, our data suggest that people see different elements of pictures," Park said. "If you're looking at an elephant in the jungle, the Westerner will focus on the elephant and the Easterner is going to be more thinking about the jungle scene that has the elephant in it."

Researchers use the terms East and West very roughly. West tends to mean American-raised people and others from independence-oriented European countries or Australia. East means East Asians — mainly Japanese, Koreans, and Chinese in research so far — as well as much of the rest of the world.

Researchers point out that the differences detected by psychological experiments and brain scans are not glaring; they are subtle but detectable trends. Also, individuals within cultures vary greatly, and gender differences can arise as well.

The brain research promises to add new precision to the earlier work. In January's study, Gabrieli said, the scanning not only showed brain differences on the line-and-square task, it allowed researchers to begin to ask how deep those differences go.

Did Easterners actually see differently, at the level of perception, or just think differently? Based on what parts of the brain were activated during the tasks, Gabrieli believes everyone sees the same thing, but may filter it differently.

"Culture is not changing how you see the world, but rather how you think and interpret."

And that could be good news: "If it changed how you saw the world, it would make the barrier higher for people to agree on what they are seeing and talk with each other," he said. "If it's in the thinking stage, even though our work suggests it's harder work to see things from a different perspective, it's much more within your reach."

The older people get, it seems, the more pronounced those cultural differences become, as if the older you are, "the more you're steeped in your own cultural mode of processing," Park said. But that does not mean such habits are immutable. Some initial psychological studies suggest that when an Easterner goes West or vice versa, habits of thought and perception quickly begin to change.

So beyond perhaps helping defuse tensions a bit between cross-cultural roommates or spouses, does East-West brain research have real-world applications?

It could have implications for, say, Western mental healthcare workers trying to help Easterners. On a broader scale, researchers say, it might be useful in business schools for students preparing to work in East-West trade, to help clarify culture gaps.

"Understanding cultural differences in the mind is really important as the world globalizes," Park said. "There can be a lot of breakdowns in communication."

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Univ. of Kentucky Is Struggling to Squelch Net Rumors

By Samuel G. Freedman
THE NEW YORK TIMES

Prof. Jeremy D. Popkin returned to his office at the University of Kentucky on Feb. 19 after teaching a lesson about Vichy France in his course on the Holocaust. During its 30 years on the curriculum, the class has grown perpetually popular, with 60 applicants vying for half as many seats. The university has even created a Judaic Studies program.

Yet, when Professor Popkin opened his e-mail that day, he was informed that his class did not exist. "This week, the University of Kentucky removed the Holocaust from its school curriculum," the message stated, "because it offended the Muslim population, which claims it never occurred." All faculty members' e-mail addresses from the history department were listed among the message's recipients.

Over the past year, faculty members and administrators at the university's main campus in Lexington have collectively received thousands of e-mail messages like this one, repeating the same baseless accusation — that pressure from Muslims had led the university to drop its Holocaust course. Like many who have sent these messages, the writer added her own preface to the one that appeared in Professor Popkin's mailbox, writing in part: "I cannot see how you faculty can go to work each day and face a generation of young adults that will be lied to even more than my generation. What next? Are we going to rewrite the facts of 9/11 so that they fit the Middle Eastern beliefs? This is simply shameful, and I am disgusted by it."

Any university trades on its reputation, and in recent years, Kentucky has been trying to improve its own. It has vigorously deepened its academic programs and added to its faculty, in hopes of raising its national standing and proving itself to be more than just a perennial basketball powerhouse. The last thing it needs, university officials say, is this smear on its good name.

"Initially, you get a couple of e-mails that on the face of it are ludicrous," said Jay Blanton, executive director of public relations and marketing for the university. "We thought, surely people aren't going to take this preposterous rumor seriously. And then you see it doesn't die, it persists."

The university's president, Lee T. Todd Jr., expressed similar consternation.

"I understand quite well the power of the Internet," he wrote in an e-mail message. "Information flows instantaneously without respect to somewhat arbitrary borders of geography or nation state. That's a positive. In this instance, though, the University of Kentucky is experiencing the flip side of that

power — the negative impact of an unfounded rumor that flows across a world seemingly without check. It's disconcerting, although perhaps understandable in that context, that so many people would be the victim of a rumor so patently and obviously without merit."

The false e-mail messages began in late April last year. A few weeks earlier, The Daily Telegraph in London had published an article online about a national commission in Britain recommending the best ways to teach difficult subject matter like the Holocaust. A subsequent article, also in The Telegraph, mentioned a school in Birmingham, England, that had dropped the Holocaust from study for fear that it would incite anti-Semitic comments from Muslim students.

As those news reports made the e-mail rounds, one or several or many readers apparently mistook the suffix for British e-mail addresses, "uk," not to mean "United Kingdom," but the "University of Kentucky." The first version of the diatribe against the university began coursing through cyberspace, urging recipients to keep forwarding it until it reached "40 million people worldwide." And the message began pouring into various computers at Kentucky, including those of the president, provost and dean of arts and sciences.

A rumor like this, said Kumble R. Subbaswamy, a physicist who is provost of the university, "can cause great problems."

"You can't put the genie back in the bottle," he continued. "It's Kafkaesque. Just when you think you've tamped it down, it shows up on another Listserv."

The initial deluge of e-mail messages subsided by early last summer. By November, however, a slightly different incarnation began arriving in ever greater numbers. At that point, Mr. Blanton drafted a press release refuting the rumor and sent it

throughout the educational and general media, as well as to individuals who had sent in complaints.

A few significant media outlets did their own coverage of the rumor. Yet despite articles in The Jerusalem Post and The Minneapolis Star-Tribune and an especially thorough investigation by the Web site snopes.com — and even despite a statement of Kentucky's innocence from the Anti-Defamation League — people kept on forwarding the message.

One can only speculate why. Mr. Blanton said he wondered if "people buy into stereotypes," that Kentuckians are a bunch of ignorant hicks who would believe any rumor.

Professor Popkin suggested that the international visibility of Iran's president, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad — who has called the Holocaust a "myth" and sponsored a conference of people who denied the mass extermination of Jews by the Nazi regime — may have somehow given undeserved authenticity to the idea that the university would stop teaching the course. And among some advocates of Jewish American causes, mostly but not entirely on the political right, there is a common view of universities as being inherently hostile to Israel and Jews, again making it seem possible that Kentucky would have dropped the class.

Meanwhile, the e-mail messages put blame for something that never happened on people like Yahya Ahmed, a senior at Kentucky and president of the school's chapter of the Muslim Student Association. "Something of this nature is not in our nature," he said. "We've tried to promote unity on this campus, and this is detrimental."

Mr. Ahmed has not taken Professor Popkin's course. Then again, he has found other ways to educate himself. Last month, he went on a study trip to Israel. While in Jerusalem, he visited Yad Vashem, the memorial museum of the Holocaust.



SIMON LU
Participants from MIT and Harvard University were invited to brainstorm ideas over the future of the internet at a TechVenture Web 2.0 event this past Friday in the Stata Center. Tech-Venture is a group of MIT students that aim to bridge the gap between MIT entrepreneurs and Venture Capitalists.

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Racz Sets Record in 100-yd Breaststroke As Youth Power MIT

Swimming, from Page 16

over the rest of the field on day two of competition, as MIT climbed into second place.

The evening's finals session got underway with the 200-yard medley relay, which saw a trio of teams touch the wall in NCAA "B" cut qualifying times. MIT's quartet of Zhou, Racz, Charpentier and Cummings earned the Engineers maximum points with a winning mark of 1:33.02, giving all four athletes First Team All-Conference honors.

Coast Guard's Fallon then eclipsed his own NEWMAC Open and Championship record with a blistering NCAA "B" cut finish of 4:04.13 in the 400-yard individual medley. Runner-up Jeffrey Meyer touched the wall in 4:09.76, earning Worcester Polytechnic Institute its first All-Conference honors of the weekend.

The 100-yard butterfly was won by Coast Guard's Nick Forni in a time of 51.31 seconds, but the event as a whole was dominated by MIT. At the time, the second-place hosts skinned their deficit behind leaders Coast Guard from 56 points all the way down to 28 points courtesy of placing five of the race's top nine finishers. Sophomore Zhou grabbed second place with a time of 51.52 seconds, while Engineers' teammates George J. Rossick '11, Deke Hu '09, Sepp and Brendon M. Sullivan '11 finished 4th, 6th, 8th and 9th, respectively.

However, Coast Guard's lead was extended back to 40 in the next event, the 200-yard freestyle. Bears' Senior Bobby Brown won the race in spectacular fashion, reaching an NCAA "A" cut and setting NEWMAC Open, Championship and pool records with a finish of 1:39.34. Runner-up Charpentier and third-place finisher Dobson of MIT both met the NCAA "B" cut qualifying standard in the event.

Not to be outdone, MIT's sophomore sensation Racz equaled Brown's feat in the next event, the 100-yard breaststroke. He touched the wall in an NCAA "A" cut time of 56.40 seconds, setting NEWMAC Championship and pool standards in the process, while missing out on breaking his own NEWMAC Open record by just 0.04 seconds.

To finish Saturday's finals session, MIT earned its second relay victory of the evening in the 800-yard freestyle relay. Dobson, Kalvin D. Kao '08, Wellings and Charpentier each garnered First Team All-Conference plaudits with an NCAA "B" cut finishing time of 6:53.31.

Day 3

Coast Guard's Brown got Sunday evening's finals session underway in spectacular fashion for Coast Guard, finishing the 1,650-yard freestyle in a blistering 15:41.81. The time reached the NCAA "A" cut and

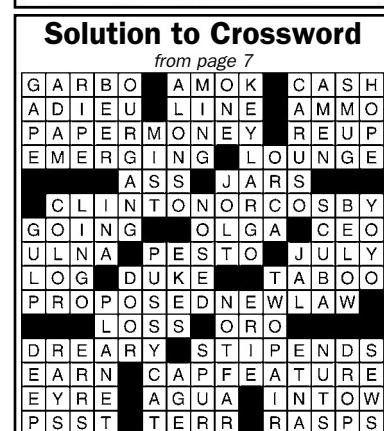
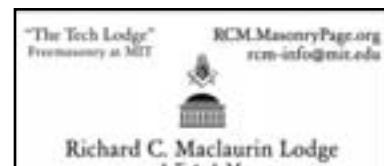
also broke Brown's own NEWMAC Open, Championship and pool records. He was pushed the entire way to the bell-lap by MIT's Dobson, who finished closely behind in 15:46.70, also reaching the NCAA "A" cut and securing Second Team All-Conference accolades.

Springfield senior Burch then notched his fourth First Team All-Conference honor in the 100-yard freestyle, clocking in at 45.59 seconds to reach an NCAA "B" cut. Also reaching the "B" cut was MIT's Charpentier, who secured Second Team accolades with a finish of 46.11 seconds.

The host Engineers made a splash in the next race, the 200-yard breaststroke, in which they took three of the top five spots. Sophomore Racz won the event with an NCAA "B" cut finish of 2:05.22, besting all of his competition by over four seconds and missing out on beating his own NEWMAC Championship record by just 0.16 seconds. MIT's duo of John R. Walk '10 and Kao finished in fourth and fifth, respectively.

The three-meter diving competition belonged to Springfield, which placed four of the top five finishers. Ben Casavant, who also won the one-meter event on Friday, scored highest with a mark of 543.60 points, while Brian Sobol earned Second Team All-Conference honors for a second time with a score of 519.85 points. Both divers' tallies surpassed the previous NEWMAC Open record of 506.75 points.

With the result of the meet already decided heading into the weekend's final race, the 400-yard freestyle relay, it would've been no surprise to see times trail off a bit. However, the desire of the competitors to give their all until the very end showed through, as Springfield's quartet of Matt Manoni, Greg Pearsall, Anthony Bruno and Burch ended the Championships with a record-setting time of 3:04.62. The mark reached the NCAA "B" cut and established new Championship, Open and pool records. MIT's relay team of Cummings, Wellings, Zhou and Charpentier nabbed Second Team accolades with a "B" cut time of 3:05.40.



SCOREBOARD

Women's Gymnastics

Sunday, March 2, 2008

SUNY Brockport (12-5)	188.975
Southern Connecticut St. Univ. (15-4)	185.700
Ithaca College (3-14)	184.325
MIT (6-12)	179.900

Men's Swimming and Diving

Sunday, March 2, 2008

NEWMAC ¹ Championship	
MIT	2nd of 7

Men's Tennis

Friday, Feb. 29, 2008

UMass-Boston (0-1)	1
MIT (2-1)	8

Saturday, March 1, 2008

Stevens Institute of Technology (0-2)	3
MIT (3-1)	6

Women's Ice Hockey

Saturday, March 1, 2008

MIT (1-18-2)	0
Manhattanville College (20-6-0)	9

Men's Ice Hockey

Saturday, March 1, 2008

Westfield State College (9-8-2)	2
MIT (14-4-1)	4

Sunday, March 2, 2008

University of Connecticut (17-6-0)	6
MIT (14-5-1)	1

Rifle

Saturday, March 1, 2008

Pennsylvania State University	2176
MIT	2198

Women's Tennis

Saturday, March 1, 2008

MIT (9-3)	9
Bates College (1-2)	0

Men's Volleyball

Saturday, March 1, 2008

MIT (14-8, 7-2 NECVA NE ²)	3
Elms College (9-7, 4-2)	2

¹New England Women's and Men's Athletic Conf.
²North East Collegiate Volleyball Association New England Division



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SPORTS

Records Fall as Men's Swimming And Diving Team Places Second

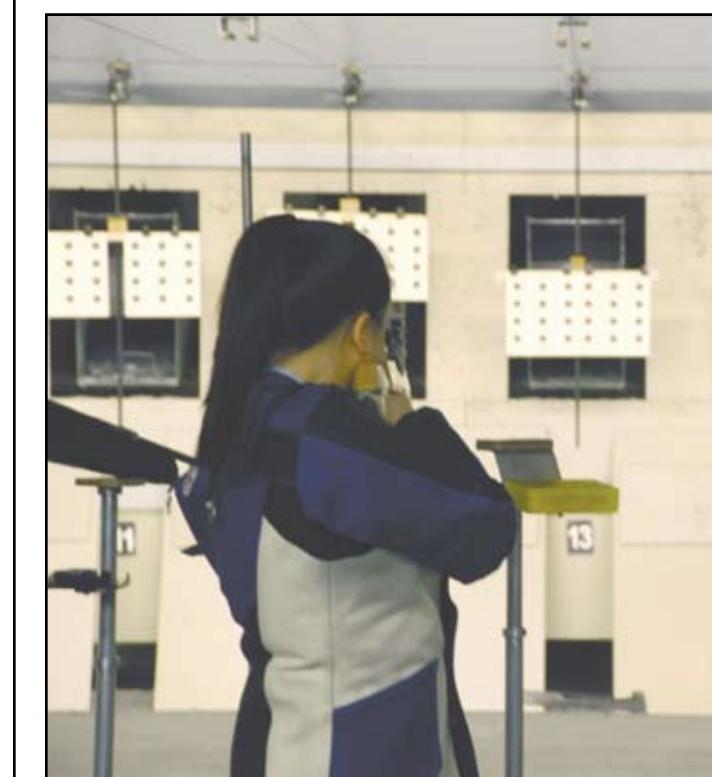
By DAPER Staff

The men's swimming and diving team placed second at this year's New England Women's and Men's Athletic Conference Swimming and Diving Championships this weekend, held at MIT's Zesiger Pool.

The U.S. Coast Guard Academy pulled away from the pack to win their third consecutive title, finishing the meet with a staggering 991 points, outdistancing runner-up MIT (868) and third-place finisher Springfield College (741).

Day 1

The Coast Guard Academy led the pack after a record-setting first day on Friday. With NEWMAC



GREGORY I. TELIAN

Justine Li '10 takes aim with her air rifle at the 2008 Mid-Atlantic Conference Championship on Saturday in the duPont Athletic Center. Li scored 520 points to help the Engineers defeat Pennsylvania State University 2198-2176 in the Expert Division of air rifle.

Open, Championship and pool records being surpassed left and right, the Bears established an opening day lead with 304 total points, followed closely by Springfield College (276) and MIT (239).

Springfield's "A" 200-yard freestyle relay team of Matt Manoni, Roy Burch, Andrew Blakesley and Greg Pearsall set the pace for the evening session by opening the finals with a blistering NCAA "A" cut time of 1:22.63, setting NEWMAC Open, Championship and pool records. MIT's top squad of Jeffrey Y. Zhou '10, Luke R. Cummings '10, Peter J. Wellings '09 and Laurent Charpentier '10 grabbed Second Team All-Conference accolades, touching the wall at 1:23.46, meeting the NCAA

"B" cut standard.

Next up was the meet's first individual event, with MIT freshman Michael J. Dobson '11 winning the 500-yard freestyle in an NCAA "B" cut time of 4:32.93. Entering the race as the second seed, Dobson improved upon his preliminary time by nearly 10 seconds to beat out top-seeded Bobby Brown of Coast Guard, who finished as the runner-up. Brown's preliminary split of 4:32.15 met the NCAA "A" cut as well as established new Championship and pool records.

More records fell in the 200-yard individual medley when Coast Guard senior Doug Fallon touched the wall first at 1:54.67, setting NEWMAC Open and Championship marks. In the 50-yard freestyle, Springfield's Burch led the way with a NEWMAC Championship record time of 20.71 seconds.

The story was the same as the divers took center stage, with Springfield grabbing both first-place and runner-up on the one-meter board. Senior Ben Casavant took the honors as the winner, earning a score of 500.30, while his freshman teammate Brian Sobol finished second with a tally of 492.80.

Rounding out the first day of action was the 400-yard medley relay, which Coast Guard won with an NCAA "B" cut time of 3:26.43. MIT's team of Zhou, Rastislav Racz '10, Toomas R. Sepp '11 and Cummings placed third, also making the "B" cut time.

Day 2

Coast Guard increased its lead

Swimming, Page 15

Women's Tennis Team Sweeps Bates College

By Jennifer A. Rees

TEAM MEMBER

The women's tennis team swept Bates College 9-0 in their first match of the spring season last Saturday, bringing their overall record to 9-3. The team came into the match ranked 23rd in the nation.

Sports Shorts

The doubles teams started off the competition by winning all three of their matches, giving MIT the early lead. Leslie A. Hansen '10 and Mariah N. Hoover '08 won 8-2 in the top doubles match against Alexandra Piacquad and Caryn Benisch of Bates. Anisa K. McCree '10 and Yi Wang '09 won in a close match 8-6 at two doubles, and Karina N. Pikhart '09 and Melissa A. Diskin '11 finished their match with a decisive 8-3 win.

The singles matches were more competitive; Four of the six singles matches went the distance to three sets, but all featured comebacks by MIT.

Hoover won a tough, four-hour match with a 7-6(3), 6-7(3), 6-2 victory over Piacquad. After falling behind 2-5 early in the first set, she made an amazing come back to win the set in a tie breaker.

Wang also won in a grueling match at three singles, 6-4, 1-6, 6-4. McCree pulled out an amazing come-from-behind victory with a 5-7, 6-2, 6-3 win, and Pikhart rounded out the three set spree with a 3-6, 6-4, 6-1 victory.

While their teammates were in these long matches, Hansen (one singles) and Diskin (four singles) cruised through their matches in straight sets, 6-0, 6-1 and 6-3, 6-1 respectively.

In addition to the official nine matches, the teams played in exhibition matches. Jenny C. Dohlm '11 and Kerry R. Weinberg '10 lost a hard fought match doubles match 5-8, but Dohlm redeemed herself with an 8-4 victory in singles. Jennifer A. Rees '11 won her singles match 8-2.

UPCOMING HOME EVENTS

Wednesday, Mar. 5, 2008

Men's Tennis vs. Salem State College 4 p.m., duPont Tennis Courts

Thursday, Mar. 6, 2008

Men's Volleyball vs. Southern Vermont College 7 p.m., Rockwell Cage



Sophomore Amy R. Magnuson '10 (left) competes in the trials for the 55-meter hurdles at the New England Indoor Track and Field championship at Boston University on Friday. On Saturday, Magnuson placed 6th in the finals with a time of 8.16 seconds, lowering her Institute record time of 8.26 seconds.

The Tech's Athlete of the Week: Jimmy Bartolotta '09

MIT guard James M. "Jimmy" Bartolotta '09 has been named Academic All-America First Team in men's basketball in the 2008 ESPN The Magazine, as selected by the College Sports Information Directors of America (CoSIDA). Bartolotta was the only junior selected to the college division first team. The announcement came after Bartolotta was selected as a finalist for the Jostens Trophy.

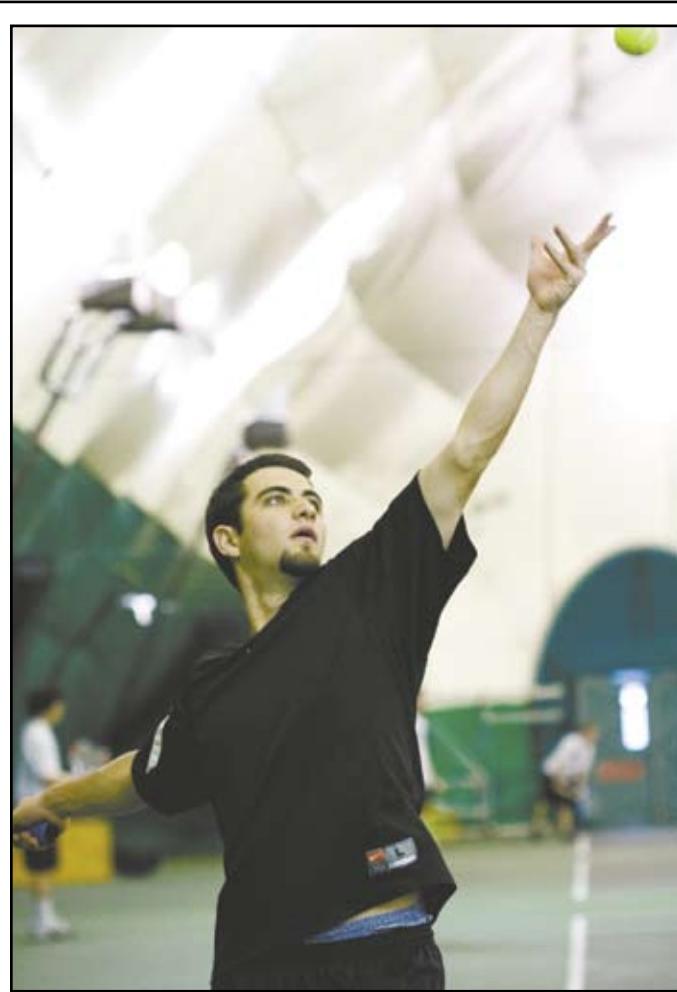
Bartolotta averaged an Institute-record 23.9 points per game this season while moving into fourth place on the MIT all-time scoring list with 1,479 points. He finished the year as the New England Men's and Women's Athletic Conference scoring champion for the second consecutive season and was ranked among the conference leaders in every category.

Bartolotta's nod marks MIT's fifth selection this year. Since the program's inception in 1952, MIT has totaled the fourth-highest membership across all NCAA divisions and is the all-time Division III leader with 139 Academic All-America honors.

He was also named one of ten finalists for the prestigious Jostens Trophy. A national award created by the Rotary Club of Salem, Va., the Jostens Trophy honors the most outstanding men's and women's Division III basketball players of the year, taking into account basketball ability, academic prowess and community service.

Bartolotta's season ended last Wednesday when the men's basketball team lost to the U.S. Coast Guard Academy in the first round of the NEWMAC tournament.

—James Kramer, DAPER Staff



VINCENT C. AUYEUNG

Eric A. Beren '08 serves during his doubles match against Stevens Institute of Technology in the J.B. Carr Tennis Bubble last Saturday. Teamed with Ken Van Tilburg '11, MIT's top doubles pair won the match 8-4 as the Engineers won the match 6-3 for their third win of the season.